Brian Beisly

OCED 5233

Spring 2013

Social Media as Training Tool

After our March session discussion about using an online forum for classroom instruction I was readying myself for a heavy task. Truth be told, it has been a little disappointing. The tool that was used is a group chat forum where the employees can communicate with their team and supervisor. It is a reliable resource for the employees because it provides an immediate response when an employee has question. The tool is not meant to be utilized as social media when compared to Facebook or Twitter; it’s used to communicate professional business related discussions. One trouble I experienced was having constant access. I was in a cofacilitation role, so only one trainer can be logged in at the trainer’s desk. I used a trainee station, any my login ID credentials are not supported. A “splashtop” program was used by mirroring a trainer’s desk computer to an iPad, but I didn’t have constant access.

We don’t normally introduce the tool during classroom training; it’s normally introduced during the second week of on-the-job-training when they are taking inbound customer calls. We introduced the chat tool on the first full day of training so that they agents could become more familiar with its use. I was concerned about using the tool in the classroom because of the potential for inappropriate use, but that concern was unfounded because it was my first experience. In fact, there only a few instances that inappropriate usage was addressed, and none were offensive enough to warrant even a simple verbal disciplinary action.

Tool usage was slow to start, but I think mostly because of not really knowing its purpose. But as week one progressed I started noticing that when it was used that some of the employees were assisting each other instead of utilizing the trainer. (pretty cool, eh?) The agents never seemed to take full advantage of the resource, but that likely is not entirely their fault because the curriculum is not designed to use the chat forum. It was useful during role plays so that they could communicate telephone extensions without yelling across the room. And they (or the trainer) were able to post in chat how to access certain information in our intranet. Some agents communicated questions in chat instead of out loud, which was interesting and appreciated.

For future use I’d like to add more structure from the beginning by providing clear instructions on what the tool’s purpose is. I plan to model the tool much more, hoping that will encourage participation and also demonstrate appropriate use. I would also like to look at gamification techniques that might incentivize usage.